GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Prepared Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)
General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

for

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Education

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SOME MOUNTAIN WOMEN IN MONTENEGRO (See Bulletin No. 2)

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Hampton Roads: Discovered by Smith, Used by Pershing

HAMPTON ROADS, of vital importance in our war operations, but little mentioned in that connection because of needful secrecy, recently attracted attention following the burning of the historic Hotel Chamberlin.

"There is but one entrance by sea into this country, and that is at the mouth of a very goodly Bay," Captain John Smith wrote in his "Map of Virginia, with a Description of the Countrey," concerning Chesapeake Bay with its attendant harbor, Hampton Roads, which he describes as "bounded on the south by Florida, on the north by New France, and whose western limits are unknown."

A few bustling ports like New York and Boston might disagree with the redoubtable Captain concerning the facilities their harbors now offer, but certainly no habor can claim a much more romantic history, not only in Colonial times, but in the World War as well.

Always Rendezvous of American Navy

Hampton Roads has been the rendezvous of the American Navy ever since there was one. When, during the early part of 1917, newspaper reports were saying that the Fleet "was swallowed up somewhere in the mists of the Atlantic," it had secretly slid out of the harbor at Hampton Roads and was resting quietly at Yorktown a few miles up the Bay, awaiting orders from Washington. At a moment's notice these huge battleships could here signal to each other with their multihued flags and steam out to sea. Through the waters of Hampton Roads thousands of men, tons of supplies, and cargoes of horses glided out during the night to play their parts on fields of France.

The harbor is a splendid sheet of water 500 feet in width with a minimum depth of 30 feet, safe from gales, and large enough to float a great navy. It is formed by the James, Nansemond, and Elizabeth rivers as they pass into Chesapeake Bay. The thriving cities of Norfolk, Newport News and Portsmouth give it commercial importance.

The first land in this vicinity that the sea-weary Captain John Smith and his men caught sight of was the eastern end of a sandy spit of land, which they named Cape Henry. Here they opened the sealed orders of the London Company and learned that they were to settle much farther inland. But, for a few days, they rested and explored the neighboring waters. They erected a cross on this spot of their first landing, in gratitude for a safe ending of their journey. Later, in 1691, a lighthouse was erected on this same spot. It is standing today and bears a tablet commemorating the landing, though a larger and much more pretentious structure has been built for lighting the shipping.

How "Old Point Comfort" Was Named

Sailing farther inland, they touched a point at the entrance to the harbor they called "Point Comfort," because of the good channel and the safe

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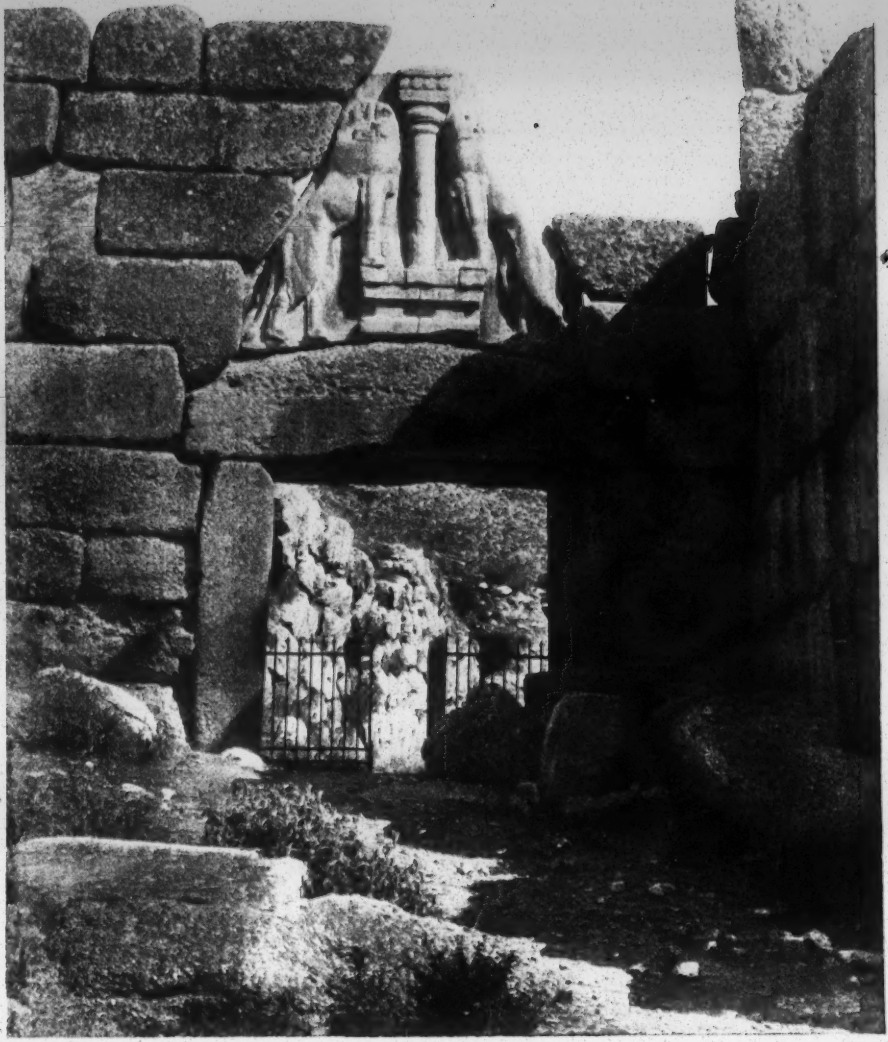

THE LION GATE AT MYCENAE (See Bulletin No. 5)

Mycenae was one of the most ancient cities of Greece, at one time being the center of a powerful State. In the fifth century it was destroyed by the Argives, and at the time of Pausanias it was deserted and has remained so ever since. The Lion Gate stands at the northwest corner of the Acropolis and is approached by a walled-in way, the object of which was to force any one approaching to expose his unshielded side to attack from the fort.

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Montenegro: A David Nation That Defied the Turkish Goliath

MONTENEGRO, one of the states that helps make up the new Jugo-Slav nation, now called the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, is described in the following communication by Marian Cruger Coffin to the National Geographic Society:

"A land of mountains, apparently without valleys, and almost destitute of vegetation, Montenegro seems to have emerged out of a chaos of the gods to be the primeval rib of the world.

"And in keeping with the country, is the proud and independent character of this race, who have retreated step by step before the Turk from the fat lands they once held, preferring freedom in their rocky fastnesses to soft living under the yoke of Islam. And it must be remembered to their everlasting credit that they not only remained free when the other Slav peoples as well as the Greek, Albanian, and Bulgar fell before the power of the Turk, but that they maintained their independence when all Europe, to the gates of Vienna, trembled before the hosts of the Crescent.

Cettinje, a "Kindergarten Capital"

"Twenty years ago Cettinje, the Montenegrin capital, was a collection of hovels. It grew to be a clean, neat little town with wide streets and low stone houses roofed with red tile. There are no attempts at architectural decoration —all is plain and bare and seems to have sprung from the very soil of the mountain-locked plain. It was called a kindergarten capital, and though but a village in size, conducted itself with the importance befitting the center of the country. It boasts a theater and the Prince's very modest palace, while the large, pretentious embassies of Austria and Russia formerly guarded opposite ends of the town like two great bloodhounds waiting to pounce on their prey.

"The national costume seems designed to show off the grace and dignity inherent in even the humblest. Crimson and gold sparkle in the sunshine, in dazzling contrast to the somber tints of the encircling mountains, real gold, too, which is elaborately worked in the garment by hand. From the royal family down, the men wear a long, wide-skirted coat of light grey, white, robin's egg blue, or dark green cloth, embroidered in gold, or dark red, open wide in front over a crimson waistcoat heavily decorated in gold, and confined about the waist by a broad sash of plaid silk. The belt is stuck full of weapons, knives, pistols, etc., for our friend considers his toilette incomplete without such accessories, and indeed one's eyes become so accustomed to seeing every man a walking arsenal that on returning to work-a-day Europe people look strangely undressed! Dark blue breeches, baggy to the knee, with the leg either encased in white homespun and low string shoes on the feet, this is thoroughly characteristic, or if the wearer be a bit of a dandy a pair of high black riding boots will be worn instead; a cane for dress occasions and the cocky stiff-brimmed cap complete the costume.

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anchorage it afforded. When later similar places were found, the one first touched was dubbed "Old," and this name has clung to it ever since. It was here, in Fortress Monroe, that Jefferson Davis was confined for a time at the close of the Civil War.

Newport News, settled in 1621 by "Master Gookin out of Ireland," was named by him in honor of his friend, Sir William Newce. A quaint old chronicler tells us that "at Newportsnews the cotton trees in a yeere grow so thicke as one's arme and so high as a man; here anything that is planted doth prosper so well as in no place better." Today this town contains one of the largest dry docks in the world and ships much of the product that once grew so abundantly on the trees that the chronicler mentions.

Norfolk, the largest city on Hampton Roads, has a history that dates back farther even than that of Jamestown. The first white men who visited the site constituted a small exploring party from Sir Walter Raleigh's colony at Roanoke Island about 1586. Almost a century later Portsmouth was settled. Since its infancy it has been famous for its navy yard, the first one having been built by the English.

Five Indians Were Reception Committee

Seven miles east of Newport News lies the ancient borough and village of Hampton. When Smith and the colonists landed at Newport News looking for a town site, five Indians met them and invited them to their village, "Kecoughtan," where Hampton now stands.

From the days of the colonists, during the Revolution when Lord Dunsmore, the Royal Governor of Virginia, was driven to the safety of his gunboats, to the fight of the Merrimac and the Monitor in its waters during the Civil War, and to its active part in the World War, the history of Hampton Roads has been fraught with interest. The "River Queen" riding at anchor on its smooth shining surface on February 3, 1865 was the scene of an informal conference between Lincoln and Seward of the Union and Alexander H. Stephens, Senator Robert M. T. Hunter and Assistant Secretary of War John A. Campbell of the Confederacy, held to arrange a peace between the North and South. Though the efforts of these men were of no avail, it was here that Lincoln voiced his intended magnanimous treatment of the Confederate States in the statement that he would "exercise the power of the executive with the utmost liberality."

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Liberia: "America's Only Colony"

(This is the fourth of a series of bulletins on the places and peoples of Africa)

LIBERIA, an African republic, has been called "America's only colony," because its settlers came from the United States though, of course, it has no governmental connection with this country.

Liberia has an area equivalent to that of Kentucky, and a total population estimated to be greater than that of any one of thirty states of the union. But of these two million or more inhabitants only about 50,000, of whom one fourth are of American origin, may be considered civilized, and take a part in the government.

The republic is situated on the west coast of Africa at the point where the coast line makes the great bend to form the Gulf of Guinea. Its position puts in directly on line of ocean communication between Europe and South Africa and points reached by way of The Cape of Good Hope.

Its southern boundary is its Atlantic coast line of some 350 miles. On the west is the British colony of Sierra Leone, where futile attempts at colonization were made before Liberia was reached; on the east and north are French possessions of the Ivory coast and Niger basin regions.

Dense Forests in the Interior

For some forty or fifty miles back of its coast Liberia has been cleared and developed, but from that imaginary line inland there are dense forests, primitive people, and Sir Harry Johnston encountered beasts, birds and reptiles living today which, he wrote "are found fossil in Miocene formations of France and southern Germany."

Thus there is the contrast of one of the most unusual experiments in political annals—Stevenson referred to Liberia as a "footnote to history"—set amid the least known region of the erstwhile "dark continent."

Planned as a reparation for the seizure of its natives as slaves, and an experiment in transplanting a far-flung race once more in their native soil, the beginnings of Liberia had many contact points with early American history.

It will be recalled that the movement for emancipating slaves had its beginning a year after the Declaration of Independence was signed, with the abolition of slavery in Vermont, and that, as early as 1 08, the importation of African slaves into this country was prohibited. Meantime George Washington having set the example, many slave owners made provision in their wills for freeing their human property.

Henry Clay Helped Launch Colony Project

Thus it came about that the freedmen's problem antedated the Civil War by half a century and Henry Clay presided over a meeting in Washington, D. C., in 1816 to form a colonization society. Bushrod Washington was the first president of that society, formally organized on New Year day in 1817,

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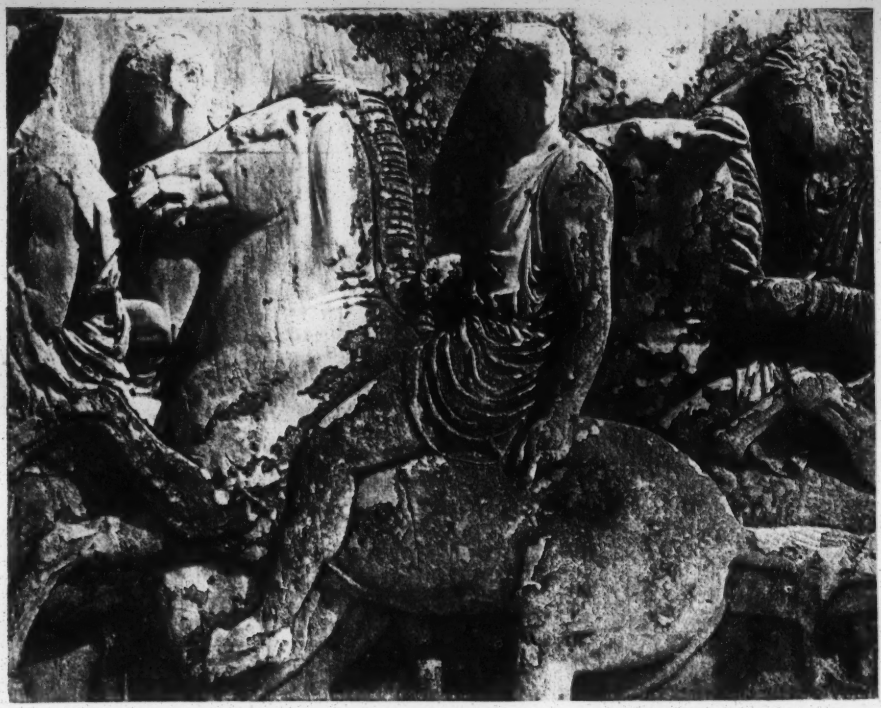
Where Millinery Registers History

"A tale hangs by the cap. The Montenegrins are a conservative people and, like all the Serbs of the Balkans, look back to the days of the great Serbian Empire when the Slavs held most of the Peninsula. The highest point of glory was reached under Stephen Dushan, 1337-1356, who planned to keep the Turk out of Europe, but who unfortunately died at the height of his career. In 1389 the different Slav peoples made their last united stand under Tzar Lazar Gubljanovich on the plain of Kosovo. The day was at first with Tzar Lazar, but, as usual in the Peninsula, jealousies prevented a concerted action and he was betrayed by his son-in-law, Vuk Brankovich, who coveted the crown. He deserted to the enemy with 12,000 followers, a frightful slaughter ensued, and the Balkans fell to the invader.

"This fateful fifteenth of June is a day of mourning throughout Serb lands and the Montenegrin cap is worn in commemoration—the black is for morning, and the red-centered crown for the blood shed on the field of Kosovo. A semicircle of gilt braid encloses the Prince's initials H. I., the circle typifying the rainbow of hope that the Turk will be driven from Europe and the great Serbian Empire again established."

Bulletin No. 2, April 19, 1920



A SECTION OF THE FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON (See Bulletin No. 5)

The frieze was cut round the top of the solid structure inside the columns and was meant to look like a procession passing along on high. It still has this appearance to a person walking some distance away, being carved in deeper relief at the top than at the bottom. The horses' feet, for instance, project about an inch and a half, while their heads extend about two inches. The Parthenon is the diamond among all the world's gems of architecture.

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Petra: Where Rock Palaces Go Begging For Tenants

THOUGH Turkey may be dismembered and pushed out of Europe, the Ottoman Empire probably will continue in control of some of the sacred shrines and most precious history spots of Asia.

For example, there is the Rock City of Petra, known as the "safe deposit" of caravans en route with precious wares to Tyre and Sidon,—which also contains "Pharaoh's Treasury."

Franklin E. Hoskins, in a communication to the National Geographic Society, describes Petra as follows:

"The Highlands east of the Jordan River are strewn with ruins marking the rise and fall of successive civilizations—Semitic, Greek, Roman, Christian, Mohammedan, and Crusader. These ruins have been preserved for the modern explorer by the tides of nomadic life, which have swept up from the Arabian desert; but at the southern end of this no-man's land, deep in the mountains of Edom, lies one of the strangest, most beautiful, and most enchanting spots upon this earth—the Rock City of Petra. Its story carries us back to the dawn of human history.

"In the days of the Nabatheans, Petra became the central point to which the caravans from the interior of Arabia, Persia, and India came laden with all the precious commodities of the East, and from which these commodities were distributed through Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, for even Tyre and Sidon derived many of their precious wares and dyes from Petra.

Rock City Was the Rome of Eastern Peoples

"The Rock City was always to these regions and peoples what Rome was to the Romans and Jerusalem to the Jews. Horites, Edomites, Nabatheans, and Romans, have all rejoiced and boasted in the possession of this unique stronghold and most remarkable city of antiquity.

"The entrance to the Rock City is the most striking gateway to any city on our planet. It is a narrow rift or defile, bisecting a mountain of many-hued sandstone, winding through the rock as though it was the most plastic of clay. This sik, or defile, is nearly two miles long. Its general contour is a wide semi-circular swing from the right to the left, with innumerable short bends, having sharp curves and corners in its general course.

"The width of the Sik varies from twelve feet at its narrowest point to 35 or 40 feet at other places. Where the gloomy walls actually overhang the roadway and almost shut out the blue ribbon of sky, it seems narrower, and perhaps at many points above the stream the walls do come closer than 12 feet. The heights of the perpendicular side cliffs have been estimated at from 200 to 1,000 feet. Heights, like distances, in this clear desert air are deceptive,

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and after several expeditions had met with misadventures through epidemics and opposition of natives, the Rev. Jehudi Ashmun, in 1821, founded Liberia.

The country's name, signifying "Land of the Free," and that of the principal city, Monrovia, in honor of the then President of the United States, are variously attributed to Rev. Ralph R. Gurley, Ashmun's friend and biographer, who drafted the first Liberian constitution, and to Robert G. Harper, of Baltimore, Md., a patron of the colonization movement.

Within a decade of Ashmun's arrival the American population had risen to nearly 1,500, a daily newspaper had been started, and a code of laws was in practical operation. Originally the Portuguese and the Dutch had sought gold, pepper, and slaves from Liberia. Today, as then, it has vast, undeveloped resources, both mineral and agricultural. But before the war it exported goodly quantities of rubber, palm oil, fibre, cocoa, coffee, ivory and spices.

Liberia is asserted to have one of the hottest climates in the world, and few areas have more rain. The yearly fall amounts to nearly 13 feet of water.

Maryland Formerly a Sister Colony

The colonists declared Liberia an independent republic in 1847, and it was recognized within a few years by nearly all countries except the United States. Previously there had been a split, and Maryland, now the southern country of the republic, was a rival State to Liberia. It had its inception from a second colonization society from the state of Maryland, in the United States.

Ten years ago President Roosevelt sent a commission to Liberia to investigate conditions. That commission's report resulted in negotiations for an adjustment of Liberia's debt, and placing of United States officials in charge of Liberian customs collections. The following year the American government, acting in agreement with England, France and Germany, assumed supervision of finances, military organizations, and boundary questions.

German merchants offended the chief executive of the republic in 1912 and out of this incident a quarrel developed which resulted in two German gunboats forcing an apology from the president. But the president retaliated by giving English traders special privileges, and in the World War Liberia cast her lot with the allied nations. The government of the republic is modelled after that of the United States.

Natives Afford Raw Material for Civilization

Now that the stream of colonists has long since stopped, the future of Liberia lies in the natives, ranging from barbarity to the verge of civilization, but practically all splendid raw material for civilizing influences.

There are no pygmies in Liberia, and some tribes, such as the Mandingos, are fine physical specimens, with a pronounced European cast of features.

There are quaint customs among the natives, many of them bearing a similarity to civilized practices, such as the Mandingo method of courting by presents which, if accepted, signify a tacit consent to further attentions, and the wearing of mourning bands, not upon the sleeve, for the native garb is often exceedingly scant, but around the fingers or about the head. These bands are made of dried grasses or palms.

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Modern Greece Has Heritage of Classic Culture

GREECE, whose classic ideals still constitute one of the most potent forces of world culture, is about to emerge to a more influential place among modern nations as the result of peace adjustments.

A communication of George Higgins Moses, former minister to Greece, to the National Geographic Society, describes contemporary Greece as follows:

"The established religion of the land is, of course, Orthodox Greek. The clergy, headed by the Metropolitan of Cetinje, are a splendid lot of men in physique and character. The Catholics, numbering some 13,000 have their own archbishop at Antivari, and the few Mohammedans possess a Grand Mufti.

"In many ways Greek life remains unchanged from its classic aspects. Modern Athens, before the war, was a brilliant capital well worth its title, 'The Paris of the Levant.' Less than a century ago it passed finally from Turkish possession, and it was then a small collection of mere hovels huddled beneath the Acropolis.

Pre-War Athens a Gay City

"In 1914 it was a city of wide and gay streets, dotted with small parks and adorned with many handsome public buildings, most of them the gifts of rich Greeks who have delighted to spend in the mother country the fortunes which they have earned abroad.

"To such generosity Athens owes the noble group of buildings which comprise the university, the National Library, and the fine classic reproduction which houses the Academy of Science, and above all and to my mind the most interesting, the noble stadium, built upon the old foundations and along the old lines and ingeniously carrying in its fabric every fragment of the old structure which could be found.

"In the midst of all this modernity stand the remnants of the golden days of Athens sedulously preserved, and open to inspection and study with a freedom nowhere equalled. The focus, of course, is the Acropolis—incomparable even in its ruins—its cliffs and grottoes still the home of legend and of fable.

"As of old, the Greeks swarm the seas. Before the war the Piraeus was one of the busiest of Mediterranean ports—indeed, it was the center of transshipment for all the East—while the Corinthian Canal, after many financial vicissitudes, now seems to be in the way of becoming each year a more and more useful route between the Ionian and the Aegean Seas.

Greeks Prefer Town Life

"The Greeks are a town people. One-tenth of the population is to be found in Athens and the Piraeus. The drain of emigration from the rural districts is enormous. In the words of a cabinet minister, it constitutes 'a grave national hemorrhage.' Indeed, in some villages in the Peloponnesus there remain scarcely enough men to fill the offices.

but after many tests and observations we are prepared to say that at places they are almost sheer for 300 to 400 feet.

Deserted Defile Once Busy Caravan Route

"Seen at morning, at midday, or at midnight, the Sik, this matchless entrance to a hidden city, is unquestionably one of the great glories of ancient Petra. Along its cool, gloomy gorge file the caravans of antiquity—from Damascus and the East, from the desert, from Egypt and the heart of Africa. Kings, queens, and conquerors have all marveled at its beauties and its strangeness. Wealth untold went in and out of it for centuries, and now for over thirteen hundred years it has been silent and deserted.

"Carved in the face of the cliff, half revealed, half concealed in the growing shadows, is one of the largest, most perfect, and most beautiful monuments of antiquity—Pharaoh's Treasury. Almost as perfect as the day it came from beneath the sculptor's chisel, fifteen hundred or two thousand years ago; colored with the natural hues of the brilliant sandstone, which added an indescribable element to the architectural beauty; flanked and surmounted by the cliffs, which had been carved and tinted in turn by the powers of nature; approached by the mysterious defile— it is almost overpowering in its effect."

"In a land of much sunshine, as Greece is, life is followed much in the open. The oven is almost invariably to be found in the courtyard, and it is heated with dried twigs, almost the only fuel of the country, which are brought in huge piles upon the backs of the patient little donkeys, who vie with the goats in being the most useful members of the household.

"At Megara the native costume appears at its best. It is rarely seen anywhere nowadays, and has almost wholly disappeared from the cities. But for the Evzones, or household troops, the fustanella would be as rare a sight in Athens as the classic garb, which is worn only by Americans."

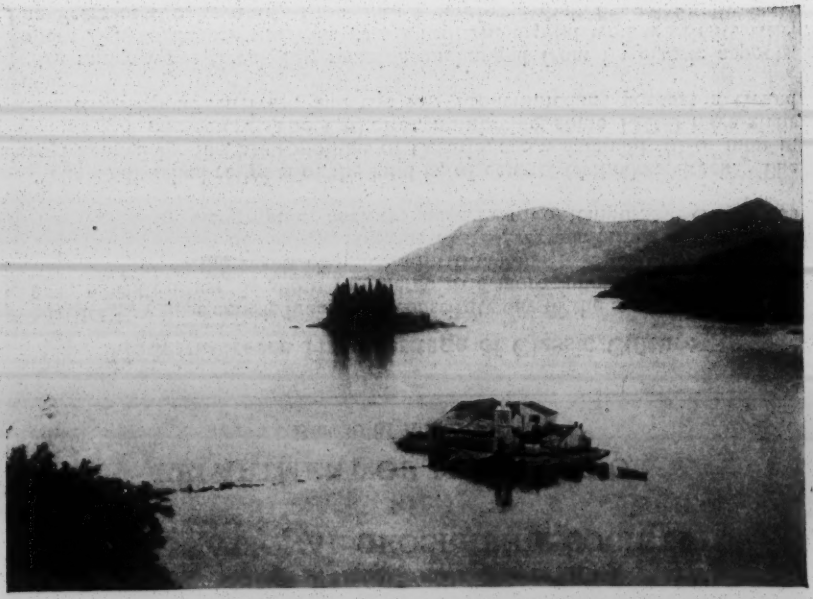

Photo by George Higgins Moses

THE SHIP OF ULYSSES IN THE HARBOR OF CORFU

There is a tradition that a ship invading the harbor of Corfu was turned to stone by Poseidon, the god of the sea, and that the little rock-bound island in the Corfu harbor is the remains of that ship.

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